

A CRITICAL REVIEW ON GRIDHRASI (SCIATICA)

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ABSTRACT

Gridhrasi is a frequently encountered problem in the present era produced commonly due to the changed life style. Sciatica is characterized by severe pain which starts in the back and radiates down to one or both lower limb. It is prevalent all over the world. *Gridhrasi* (sciatica) is also pain dominant lifestyle disorder, in which the pain starts from *Sphik Pradesh* (back region) and radiates towards the foot. On the basis of the symptoms, Sciatica can be correlated with *Gridhrasi* in *Ayurveda*. *Gridhrasi* is included in *Vataja Nanatmaja vyadhi* and also considered as a maharoga by *acharya Charaka*. In all Ayurveda classics, the description of the diseases is available. But *Sushruta*, the father of surgery has described all the details about the disease.

Keywords: *Gridhrasi, siravedha, sciatica, ayurveda*

INTRODUCTION

Changing life style of modern human being has created several disharmonies in his biological system as the advancement of busy, professional and social life, improper sitting posture in office, factories continuous and over exertion jerky movements during travelling and sports – all these factors creates an undue pressure to the spinal cord and play a chief role in producing lower backache and sciatica. Similar progressive disorders affecting the pelvis and nearer structure are also

precipitating in this condition. In this way, this disease is now becoming a significant threat to the working population, improper sitting posture, jerky movement during travelling & sports may worsen the disease condition.^{1, 2, 3}

Now a day's most common disorder which effects the movements of leg particular in middle age is low backache out of which 40% are radiating pain which comes under sciatica syndrome which effects daily routine work.⁴ Sciatica is characterized by constant aching

pain which felt in the lumber region may radiate to the buttock, thigh, calf and foot⁵. Sciatic pain radiates along the course of the sciatic nerve⁶. According to Stanlay J. Swierzewski, low backache affects 80-90% of people during their life time but sciatica occurs in about 5% of cases. It is common between 30-40 yrs of age and affects both the sexes (male and female) equally⁷.

On the basis of the symptoms, Sciatica can be correlated with *Gridhrasi* in *Ayurveda*. *Gridhrasi* is included in *Vataja Nanatmaja vyadhi* and also considered as a *maharoga* by *acharya Charaka*. In all *Ayurveda* classic, the description of the diseases is available, but *Sushruta*, the father of surgery has described all the details about the disease.

Sushruta (2 A.C) has given elaborated descriptions of aetiopathogenesis, symptomology, management and various other aspects of *Gridhrasi* in his treatise, named *Sushruta samhita*.

The treatment of sciatica is a challenge for the modern medicine and surgery. The treatment option for sciatica in present time includes.

1. Conservative treatment
2. Epidural steroid injection
3. Peri-radicular infiltration
4. Surgical treatment

In Ayurvedic texts, there are various type of treatment described for *Gridhrasi*.

They are as follow –

1. Oral medication
2. *Swedana*
3. *Snehana*

4. *Basti karma*
5. *Agni karma*
6. *Siravedha*

ETIMOLOGY

Gridh' is the *dhatu* which makes the word '*Gridhra*' from which the word '*Gridhrasi*' is derived. The person, who desires to eat the meat greedily, is denoted as '*Gridhra*' and the disease which occurs commonly in these persons is called *Gridhrasi*⁸.

Definition of Gridhrasi:

Sushruta:

1. The condition in which *Vata* invading the *Kandaras* (tendons) of the ankles and toes produces *kshepan* (decrease movement) in the thighs, this disease known as *Gridhrasi*.⁹

Charaka:

2. In *Gridhrasi*, *Nitamba* (gluteal region), *Kati* (lumber), *Prushtha* (posterior of thigh), *Uru* (knee), *Jangha* (calf) and *Pada* (foot) are affected respectively. *Sthambha* (stiffness), *Ruk* (pain), *Toda* (pricking sensation), and *Muhuspandanam* (tingling sensation) these found in *Vataja* type of *Gridhrasi* whereas in *Vata-Kaphaja* type of *Gridhrasi Tandra* (fatigue), *Gaurava* (heaviness) and *Arochaka* (aversion) in addition of *Vataja* type are found.¹⁰

Bhavaprakasha:

3. He explained *Dehapravakrata* (improper posture of body) in *Vataja* type of *Gridhrasi* and in *Vata-Kaphaja* type of *Gridhrasi Gaurava* (heaviness), *Agnimandha* (loss of appetite), *Tandra* (fatigue), *Mukhapraseka* (excessive salivation), *Bhaktadvesha* (anorexia) in addition of *Vataja* type *Gridhrasi*.¹¹

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

NIDANA PANCHAKA of GRIDHRASI

Nidana (Causative factors)

The particular causative factors of *Gridhrasi* are not mentioned in the classics. The general causes of *Vata Vyadhi* are considered as the causes of *Gridhrasi* because it is considered in 80 *Nanatmaja Vata Vyadhi*.¹²

Poorvaroopaa

Gridhrasi being a *Vata Vyadhi*, the *samanya Purvaroopaa* of *Vata Vyadhi* are the *Purvaroopaa* of *Gridhrasi*. In *Samhita Avyakta Lakshana* (unmanifested symptom) is the *Purvaroopaa* of *VataVyadhi*.¹³

Roopa

In *Gridhrasi Ruk, Toda, Stambha* and *Muhuspandana* are the cardinal symptoms.¹⁴ To be more precise about the track of pain, *Chakrapani* says that the pain starts at *Sphik* and then radiates to *Kati, Prishtha, Uru, Janu, Jangha* and *Pada* in order. Also *Sakthik-shepanigraha* is added to the list of cardinal signs by *Acharya Sushruta* and *Vagbhata*.¹⁵ *Tandra, Gaurava, Aruchi, Bhaktadwasha, Mukhaprasaka* etc. are the *lakshana* of *Vata- Kaphaj Gridhrasi*. Some signs and symptoms like *Dehasyappravakrata, Janu, Uru Sandhi Spurana* etc. have been defined as *Vatik Lakshana* by *Bhavaprakasha, Madhavidana* and *Yogaratanakara*. *Vangasena* has also added pain in *Payu* as one of the symptoms. *Samprapti* For the disease *Gridhrasi*, the detailed *Samprapti* has not been mentioned in *Ayurvedic classics*. Since *Gridhrasi* is a *Vata Vyadhi*, the general *Samprapti* of *Vata Vyadhi* along with specific

description available are considered here for the explanation of *Samprapti* there are two main reasons by which *Vata* gets vitiated. They are *Dhatukshaya* and *Margavarodha*. In *Gridhrasi*, exposure to mild but continuous trauma to *Kati, Sphik* region occur because of improper posture, travelling in jerky vehicles, carrying heavy loads, digging etc. or sometimes spinal cord injury, improperly treated pelvic diseases are responsible for producing *Sthanavaigunya* at *Kati, Sphik, Prishtha* etc. They may not be able to produce the disease at the instance, but after acquiring some *Vyanjaka Hetu* (exciting cause), the disease may be produced. Here, the *Samprapti* takes place either by *Apatarpana* or *Santarpana* or *Agantuja*.

Doshika Dominance in Gridhrasi

According to *Charaka, Sushruta* and *Vagabha* a *Vata Dosha* is dominance in *Gridhrasi. Samprapti Ghatak*¹⁶

Dosha – *Vata, Kapha pradhan Tridosha*

Dushya – *Rakta, Mamsa, Meda, Nadi sansathan*

Adhishtan - *Kati, Uru, Janu, Jangha, Pada*

Srotas – *Raktavaha, Mamsavaha, Medavaha, Asthivaha*

Sroto dushti prakar - *Sanga, Sira granthi*

Agni – *Vishmagni, Mandagni Vyadhi*

swabhava – *Aashukari/ Chirkari*

Sadhyta - *Naveen – Krichrasadhya*

SADHYA – ASADHYATA

Gridhrasi is a *Vata Vyadhi* and all the *Vata Vyadhis* become *Asadhya* (incurable) or *Duroopakrama* (complicated) if neglected after a certain period of time.¹⁷

Generally, it is seen that *Gridhrasi* if given proper treatment and if proper diet is maintained together with *Nidana Parivarjana* is curable but, is usually not *Sukhasadhya* (easy to cure). It is usually *Kashtasadhya* (difficult to cure). Also, it is observed that *Vata-Kaphaja Gridhrasi* is easily curable as compared to pure *Vataja Gridhrasi*.

*Pathya – Apathya*¹⁸ - *Nidana sevana* results into various pathological changes in the body that creates a disease. *Nidana Parivarjana* will stop further pathogenesis in the body. Therefore *Pathya & Apathya* have a great role with each disease. *Gridhrasi*, being a *Vata Vyadhi*, the *Pathyapathya* mentioned for *Vata Vyadhi* should be followed.

Pathya— *Rakta Shali, Purana Shashtika Shali, Kulatha, Maasha, Godhum, Navin Tila, Lavana, Dugdha, Ghrita, Dadhi, Matsyandika, Dadhikurchika, Patola, Shigru, Vartaka, Lashuna, Tambula, Jal Krida, Samvahan, Pari eka* etc.

Apathya- *Chanak, Kalaya, Shyamak, Nivar, Kangu, Mudga, Rajmashak, Katthilaka, Nishpavabija, Bimbi, Kasheruka, Tadag, Tatini Jala, Sheetambu, Viruddhanna. Dravyas* Having *Kashaya, Katu, Tikta Rasa* indulgence in sex, excessive riding on vehicles, excessive walking, sleeping on hard beds should be avoided. *Chinta, Ratrijagarana, Vegavidharena, Shrama, Vaman and Upavasa* etc.

Chikitsa -Sutra:

In *Ayurveda Aushadha* is considered as one of the four fold constituents of *Chikitsa Chatushpada*. *Gridhrasi* being one of *Vata Vyadhi* general line of treatment can be explained

here. For better understanding these principles of treatment are explained under three headings-

1. *Nidana Parivarjana*

2. *Shodhana Chikitsa.Snehana Karma- Snehana* should be done only in *Niroopastambhita Vata*.¹⁹ By the word *Snehana* both external and internal *Snehana* is included. For internal *Snehapana chaturvidha Mahasneha* are indicated. But *Taila* is praised in *Vata - Vyadhi* as it is having exactly opposite properties as that of *Vata*.²⁰ *Swedana Karma- Nadi, Prastara, Sankara* etc. are the various types of *Swedana Karma*.²¹ *Virechana Karma- Trivrut, Aaragvadha and Erand Taila* should be used for *Virechana*.²² *Nasya Karma Basti Karma- Niruh Basti- Erandmuladi Kwath. Anuvasan Basti-Saindhvadi Taila. Agnikarma- Charaka* mentions *Siravedha* (between the *Kandara & Gulfa*), *Basti (Anuvasan & Niruh)* and *Agnikarma* as the line of treatment for *Gridhrasi*.²³ *Siravedha - Sushruta*, being the master of *Shalyatantra* has advised only *Siravedha* at *Janu* after flexion.²⁴ *Siravedha* four *Angula* above or below *Janu* is mentioned for *Gridhrasi* in both *Ashtanga Samgraha* and *Ashtanga Hridaya*.²⁵

3. *Shamana Chikitsa*- After completing the *Shodhana Karma, Shamana Chikitsa* is indicated to subside the residual *Dosha*. If *Dosha Kopa* is less, then *Shamana Chikitsa* is enough and if the patient is very weak, then only *Shamana Chikitsa* can be used even in *Prabhuta Dosha* condition. For *Shamana Chikitsa* following medicines are used in clinical practice-

Nakula Taila (Bhaishajya Ratnavali), Nukuladhya Ghrita (Bhaishajya Ratnavali), Brihat

Chagaladi Ghrita (Bhaishajya Ratnavali), Maha Narayana Taila (Bhaishajya Ratnavali), Triguna Rasa (Sahasra Yoga), Sahacharadi Taila (Sahasra Yoga), Rasna Taila (Bhela Samhita), Ksheerabala Taila (Ashtanga Hridaya), Varuni Taila (Sharangadhara Samhita), Dhatturadi Taila (Sharangadhara Samhita), Mashadi Taila (Sharangadhara Samhita), Maharasnadi kwath (Sharangadhara Samhita), Devdarvadi kwath (Sharangadhara Samhita), Sarvaga kampa Rasa (Rasa Ratnakar), Nakula Taila (Harita Samhita), Masha Taila (Vangasena), Maha masha Taila (Chakradatta), Vishagarbha Taila (Yogaratanakar), Rasna Guggulu, (Chakradatta), Trayodashanga Guggulu, (Chakradatta).

DISCUSSION

Gridhrasi is *Vata Nanatmaja Vyadhi*. *Vata* is playing main role in *Gridhrasi*. Obviously, *Pakwashaya* is the *Udbhavasthana* of the disease. Among the five types of *Vata*, *Apana* and *Vyana Vayu* are essential factor of *Gridhrasi*. *Apana* resides in the lower part of the body especially *Kati*, *Basti* etc. Because of various *Hetu Apana* *vayu* is vitiated. In *Gridhrasi*, *Sakthiutkshepanigrahat* is the main sign i.e., lifting of the lower limb is affected. This clearly explains the involvement of *Vyana Vayu* in the *Samprapti* as these movements are governed by *Vyana Vayu*. Also, sometimes *Kapha* is the *Anubandhi Dosha* producing *Vata-Kaphaj Gridhrasi*. The *Samprapti* of *Gridhrasi* takes place either by *Dhatukshaya* or *Margavarana* or due to *Agantuja* causes like *Abhigata*. In *Dhatukshaya* *Samprapti*, due to improper nourishment of *Rasadi Dhatu*, these *Dhatu* land into *Kshaya avastha*. *Dhatukshaya* further vitiates *Vata* causing *Grid-*

hrasi. When *Vayu* is obstructed by *Kapha*, *Ama* etc. it gets vitiated leading to *Margavarana* *Samprapti* of *Gridhrasi*. *Agantuja* factors are mentioned as a cause of *Gridhrasi* by both the systems of medicine. All these vitiated *Dosha* affect the *Kandara* of leg. Movements of leg is the function of *Kandara* when this *Kandara* is affected, there is pain in the leg radiating from *Nitamba* (gluteal region), *Kati* (lumber), *Prushtha* (posterior of thigh), *Uru* (knee), *Jangha* (calf) and *Pada* (foot) etc. The pain is accompanied by *Toda*, *muhuSphandanam*, *Stambha*. Due to pain, the upward lifting of leg is painful. *Acharya Sushruta* clearly mentioned the involvement of *Kandara* in *Gridhrasi*.²⁶ *Dalhana* explains *Kandara* as *Mahasnayu*. According to *Vaidyak Shabdasinghu*, *Snayu* are the *Nadi* that conduct *Vayu*. According to *Sushruta*, *Vayu* in its normal state, while coursing through its specific *Sira* helps the unobstructed performance of its specific functions viz. *Prasarana* and *Akunchana* and produces clearness and non-illusiveness of *Buddhi* and the sense organs. When vitiated *Vayu* enters the *Sira*, it causes variety of diseases²⁷ *Sushruta* has quoted special variety of *Sira* called as *Vata-vaha Sira*, which are the channels of movement of *Vata*, in the senses.

Charaka mentions *Siravedha* between the *Kandara* & *Gulfa*, *Basti* (*Anuvasana* & *Niruha*) and *Agnikarma* as the line of treatment for *Gridhrasi*. *Ayurveda* takes a unique approach to the management of above mentioned neuropathies with a special emphasis on eliminating their cause by *Panchkarma*, physiotherapy and medicinal treatment with help of a wide range of herbal and herbo-mineral drugs. *Panchkarma* therapy is especially advocated

in the treatment of neurological diseases. Different type of *Snehana*, *Swedana* are efficacious. Besides special treatment like *Shirobasti*, *Shirodhara* and *Basti* therapy are indicated in such diseases. *Basti* is the best therapy for mitigating *Vata*. *Ayurvedic* philosophy teaches us that the individual with a purely *Sattvik* nature does not experience disease. Likewise, one who is sick cultivates a *Sattvik* mind brings rapid healing to their body. Hence all patients should be encouraged to reduce stress and cultivates practices such as meditation which bring peace of mind.

Modern science have so many treatments like Conservative treatment Epidural steroid Injection, Peri-radicular infiltration, Surgical treatment which are used in sciatica but complication are more in modern science. So *Ayurvedic* approach of treatment is much better as compared with allopathic treatment.

Nidana Parivarjana, *Sodhana Chikitsa* & *Shamana Chikitsa* are main route of treatment for any disease. *Sodhana* may be recommended for *Bahu-dosha*, but *Shamana* is also essential for removing the remained *Dosha* after *Shodhana* process.

CONCLUSION

Gridhrasi, a painful condition in which, the person cannot sit and walk properly affecting his normal day to day activity. The *Gridhrasi Nidana* and *Samprapti* are not given separately in *classics* but it is one of the eighty *Natanatmaja Vata-Vyadhi*, the same *Nidana* are applicable in this disease. Clinically also it is observed that *Nidana of Vata-Vyadhi* such as *abhigata*, *bharaharana*, *vegavidharana*, *vish-tambhi*, *ruksha*, *alpa ahara*, *dukhasaiya*, *duk-*

hasana are the most common causes of *Gridhrasi*. In *Gridhrasi*, *Vata* is the main factor producing the disease. Other *doshas* may also be involved. *Gridhrasi* being a *Vata Vyadhi*, the *samana Purvaroop* of *Vata Vyadhi* are the *Purvaroop* of *Gridhrasi*. In *Samhita Avyakta Lakshana* is the *Purvaroop* of *Vata-Vyadhi*. *Rasa*, *Rakta*, *Meda*, *Asthi*, *Majja dhatu* are affected in this disease. *Nidana Parivarjana*, *Shodhana Chikitsa* & *Shamana Chikitsa* are main route of treatment for any disease. *Shodhana* may be recommended for *Bahu-dosha*, but *Shamana* is also essential for removing the remained *Dosha* after *Shodhana* process.

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